

Iowa Department for the Blind & Bookshare Guidance  
May, 2010

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) and Bookshare have been designated Authorized Users to the NIMAC by the Iowa Department of Education.

IDEA has outlined which students with disabilities are eligible to receive textbooks from these two entities. These students are considered to be Chafee/NIMAS eligible.

Eligible students are students, who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled or have a reading disability based on an organic dysfunction. The Chafee/NIMAS eligibility requirements can be found on the Trueaim Website in the section titled “eligibility.”

The IDB serves all four groups of students. They provide Braille, large print, audio, and digital text formats of printed materials which students require to gain access to the general education curriculum. The Department uses a strict interpretation of these eligibility requirements. In the case of a reading disability based on an organic dysfunction, the IDB requires the signature of a physician (M.D. or D.O.) on the library application to certify that the student is eligible.

Bookshare can also serve all four groups of students. They use a different/commonly used interpretation of the eligibility requirements especially in regard to reading disabilities. Bookshare’s list of certifying professional goes beyond a medical doctor and includes special education professionals and other medical professionals.

If a book cannot be found in the NIMAC, both entities can search for the requested materials in other databases. The IDB requires the school to provide print copies of materials that need to be produced in alternate formats if they cannot find the materials requested. Bookshare may be able to purchase books that are not available in their collection.

The IDB will refer educators to Bookshare when it appears to be the best resource for particular materials for a given student.

In general, the IDB is more flexible in terms of available formats and types of materials that can be produced (such as teacher-created worksheets). Bookshare works strictly with published books, but may have faster turn-around times. Making use of both entities will provide students with the greatest range of materials and services.

If a student with a disability qualifies under the IDB or Bookshare, the IEP team should mark “yes” on the IEP signifying Chafee/NIMAS eligibility.